

Message Text

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TO AMEMBASSY LIMA PRIORITY
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INFO AMEMBASSY CARACAS PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY BRASILIA PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY SANTIAGO
AMEMBASSY LA PAZ
AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES

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E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PBOR, PEPR, PE, EC, VE, BR, BL, CI

SUBJECT: ASSISTANT SECRETARY TODMAN'S CONVERSATION WITH
PERUVIAN AMBASSADOR

SUMMARY: PERUVIAN AMBASSADOR GARCIA BEDOYA MET WITH ASST
SECRETARY TODMAN ON FEBRUARY 24 TO EXPRESS HIS CONCERN OVER
VENEZUELAN PRESIDENT PEREZ' REFERENCES TO ECUADOREAN RIGHTS
IN THE AMAZON BASIN AND AN ALLEGED STATEMENT BY AN AMERICAN
EMBASSY OFFICIAL IN QUITO WHICH HE BELIEVED COULD REFLECT A
CONFUSED UNDERSTANDING OF THE ACCESS PROBLEM. HE SUGGESTED
THAT PRESIDENT CARTER SEEK SUPPORT FOR THE U.S. POSITION OF
ENCOURAGING PERU AND ECUADOR TO CONTINUE PRIVATE BILATERAL
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DISCUSSIONS WHEN HE MEETS WITH THE PRESIDENTS OF VENEZUELA
AND BRAZIL. END SUMMARY

1. GARCIA BEDOYA DESCRIBED ECUADOREAN FOREIGN MINISTER
AYALA'S FEBRUARY 9 SPEECH ON THE ACCESS ISSUE AS "TAKING
CERTAIN CONCEPTS TOO FAR" AND CONTAINING "OLD ILLUSIONS"
ABOUT ECUADOREAN SOVEREIGN ACCESS TO THE AMAZON. GARCIA

BEDOYA MENTIONED PERUVIAN COMMUNIQUE OF FEBRUARY 11, WHICH CATEGORICALLY REJECTED THE ECUADOREAN THESIS, AND SAID THE GOP BELIEVES PUBLIC ANNOUNCEMENTS LIKE AYALA'S ARE INCONVENIENT AND DO NOT SERVE THE BEST INTERESTS OF EITHER PARTY. THE PERUVIANS, HE SAID, DESIRE TO CONTINUE PRIVATE

DISCUSSIONS ABOUT AMAZONIAN COOPERATION. A NARROW ECUADOREAN "SOVEREIGN" CORRIDOR TO THE MARANON RIVER, AN IDEA ALLEGED BY THE ECUADOREANS TO HAVE THE SUPPORT OF PRESIDENT PEREZ, IS, HOWEVER, "IMPOSSIBLE" AS IT WOULD CUT ACROSS PERUVIAN OIL EXPLOITATION AREAS AND FURTHER, WOULD VIOLATE THE RIO PROTOCOL. GARCIA BEDOYA THOUGHT, NEVERTHELESS, THAT A LOW-KEY BILATERAL AGREEMENT COULD BE REACHED WHICH WOULD BE IN HARMONY WITH THE RIO PROTOCOL. TODMAN NOTED THAT ANY SUCH AGREEMENT MUST BE POLITICALLY ACCEPTABLE TO ALL SIDES AND JURIDICALLY BASED IF IT IS TO ENDURE.

2. GARCIA BEDOYA ALSO EXPRESSED GOP CONCERN OVER A STATEMENT ALLEGEDLY MADE BY THE US CHARGE IN QUITO TO A PERUVIAN MILITARY ATTACHE AT A SOCIAL FUNCTION. AS A RESULT THE LATTER FORMED THE IMPRESSION THAT THE US BELIEVED ECUADOR HAD BEEN DESPOILED OF ITS AMAZON RIVER ACCESS BY PERU AND THAT PERU WAS OBLIGED TO MAKE RESTITUTION.

3. GARCIA BEDOYA SUGGESTED THAT IT WOULD BE OPPORTUNE FOR THE US TO REITERATE ITS POLICY OF ENCOURAGING BILATERAL
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TALKS AND A MUTUALLY BENEFICIAL SETTLEMENT OF THE ISSUE, POSSIBLY DURING PRESIDENT CARTER'S VISIT TO VENEZUELA AND BRAZIL. THE FORMER COUNTRY, HE NOTED, HAS ALREADY INTERJECTED ITSELF INTO THE PROBLEM AND THE LATTER IS ONE OF THE GUARANTORS OF THE RIO PROTOCOL. ASSISTANT SECRETARY TODMAN SAID HE THOUGHT THE IDEA A MERITORIOUS ONE BUT DID NOT MAKE ANY COMMITMENT.

4. IN RESPONSE TO A QUESTION FROM THE ASSISTANT SECRETARY CONCERNING THE STATUS OF BOLIVIAN CORRIDOR NEGOTIATIONS, GARCIA BEDOYA NOTED THAT WHILE PERU IS INTERESTED IN MOVING THE TALKS FORWARD, THE MOMENT APPEARS INOPPORTUNE BECAUSE OF 1) BOLIVIA'S PREOCCUPATION WITH ELECTION PREPARATIONS; 2) THE POSSIBILITY THAT CHILE MIGHT MISCONSTRUE A PERUVIAN INITIATIVE AS AN ATTEMPT TO AGGRAVATE ANOTHER OF CHILE'S PROBLEMS WHILE SHE IS EMBROILED IN THE BEAGLE CANAL DISPUTE. HE EXPRESSED THE HOPE THAT TALKS MIGHT RESUME SOME MONTHS HENCE.

5. DURING THEIR CONVERSATION GARCIA BEDOYA CONGRATULATED THE ASSISTANT SECRETARY ON HIS RECENT ADDRESS TO THE CENTER FOR INTER-AMERICAN RELATIONS IN NEW YORK, ESPECIALLY

PRAISING THE VIEWS EXPRESSED ON HUMAN RIGHTS. ALSO, HE REGISTERED GOP CONCERN OVER POSSIBLE NEW RESTRICTIONS ON COPPER AND ZINC IMPORTS BEING SOUGHT BY US PRODUCERS. HE BELIEVED THAT SUCH RESTRICTIONS, FOLLOWING THOSE RECENTLY PLACED ON SUGAR, WOULD HAVE A SERIOUS EFFECT ON PERU. VANCE

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